

Qadhdhafi, 'Abd al-Azim

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LIBYA

AL-QADHDHAFI INTERVIEWED BY EGYPTIAN OPPOSITION FIGURES

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[Interview with Libyan leader Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi by Salah 'Isa, Faridah al-Naqqash, 'Abd-al-'Azim Manaf and Sa'd Zaghlul Fu'ad, members of the Egyptian opposition; date and place not specified]

[Text] The magazine AL-MAWQIF AL-'ARABI, which is published in Cyprus and supports the Libyan Jamahiriyyah, published in its last issue a long interview with Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi, conducted by a group of political figures and journalists from the Egyptian opposition: Salah 'Isa, Faridah al-Naqqash, 'Abd-al-'Azim Manaf and Sa'd Zaghlul Fu'ad.

In view of the importance of the interview and the timeliness of the issues touched upon, in particular that of the expulsion of foreign workers, both Egyptian and Tunisian, some of the important parts are presented here.

Faridah al-Naqqash: Before beginning our discussion, Colonel, we would like to relay to you the complaint of Egyptians working in Libya regarding the way in which the decree terminating their work contracts was carried out. We are confident that the political decree was not intended to do so, but it was carried out in a way that will leave the Egyptian people with deep wounds and regrettable memories, though we are confident of the good-heartedness of the Libyan people and, in general, of all their good intentions.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: I was informed of this today, and I will follow the matter personally.

Sa'd Zaghlul Fu'ad: I circulated among the Egyptians who had assembled at the port of Tripoli waiting to depart, and I found them wounded by the procedures. They had no objection to the decree, but it is strange that the matter had gone so far as to include the confiscation of a refrigerator or a washing machine, or to prohibit them from leaving the country with an iron.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: Things like this do not happen in Egypt?

Faridah al-Naqqash: Colonel, is there really a decree terminating the work contracts of Egyptians in Libya?

prerequisite for a growing number of unpoliticized bureaucrats and technocrats in order to fill "leadership positions."

The successive political organizations which eventually crystallized in the Socialist Union did not provide an opportunity for the emergence of true political leaders except within the most limited scope. These organizations, by virtue of their being formed by the government, were unable to produce their own special leaders. Their leaders "came down" from above and therefore it was no coincidence that they did not provide, for example, ministers and government officials, save for a limited number of exceptional cases. The opposite was true in the sense that government agencies and the public sector were the ones that used to nurture leadership positions in successive political organizations.

Added to that is the fact that the great majority of the Free Officers occupied the significant positions in the various government agencies in their thirties at the expense of one or two subsequent generations! All this helps explain the leadership crisis currently suffered by existing parties and the presence of the "generation gap" in the political chain within their ranks.

The fourth point has to do with the cultural and social reality of Egyptian society in general. For autocracy is still a common hereditary disease in Egyptian society in general and is not restricted to its political institutions. Government agencies and public-sector bodies, cooperative organizations, labor and professional unions as well as universities, colleges and research centers are all managed by the "autocratic" method whereby one person or a handful of persons dominate their activities with an extraordinary ability to outwit organizations and bylaws. Nepotism and favoritism still play a huge role and within this general framework, autocracy is not anomalous in political parties. In this case, instead of being a tool for developing the social and political reality and overcoming its negative aspects, it has become captive to this reality and an embodiment of its negative features.

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Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: If the Egyptians working in Libya support the Egyptian regime by providing it with hard currency, then they are indirectly assisting "Israel," and therefore must be expelled.

Faridah al-Naqqash: Is it useful to replace all the Egyptian and Arab workers with workers from Ghana, Korea and the Philippines?

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: The decree to terminate the foreign workers in the Jamahiriyah is a general one, and does not apply specifically to Egyptians. Since you are journalists and are now here in Libya, look for the truth of the matter yourselves. Go take a look at those who are being deported. Are they just Egyptians, or all the foreign workers in Libya?

Faridah al-Naqqash: Most of those being deported, Colonel, are Egyptians.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: Because most of those working in Libya are Egyptians. Instead of saying "Thank you," you say to me "Damn you," because most of those whose contracts are being terminated are Egyptians. We are used to having the Arabs deny a favor.

[Several voices at once] No, Colonel, we do not object to the decree, but to the way in which it has been carried out.

Faridah al-Naqqash: We are not saying that. We are saying that the Egyptians helped in the development plans in the Jamahiriyah, for the future of the whole Arab people, and not just for the future of the Egyptians.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: We do not deny that. They have been working with us for 16 years. I am the one who brought the Egyptians into Libya. I am the one who has proposed unity with Egypt on more than one occasion. I am the one who said that the Libyan oil belongs to the Egyptians and the Libyans. But you greeted us with ingratitude and rejection.

Salah 'Isa: Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, you appear to your enemies, and perhaps to some of your friends, as a puzzle. You say no to everything, and yet you are the president of an ambitious country.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: (interrupting) Point of order! I am not a president. I am the leader of a revolution. The Jamahiriyah does not have a president, because the people are the president.

Salah 'Isa: I am sorry. You are the leader of a revolution in a small country with limited resources. Yet you say no to everything, to the point that some people say that you are simply an historical objective, in the sense that you are a symbol of the country's rejection of what has been presented to it, since there is much that is impractical in your policy. What do you say to that?

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: I say what I think is right and necessary, based on a nationalism that gives expression to the Arab nation, but in a regional reality that includes all the tragedies that I have mentioned. We are a small, poor desert country with few inhabitants. But duty is duty and what is

right is right. Should I say yes to America when it takes the Gulf of Sidra? I say no. Should I say yes to them when they want hegemony over the Arab countries? I say no. Should I say yes to recognizing "Israel"? I say no. Should I consent that Palestine be its territory? I say no. Should I consent that the Arabs pay for Hitler's crime by being pushed out of their land and deprived of their future in payment for the oppression of the Romans, the Europeans and the Nazis against the Jews? I say no. I have to say no, whatever the reason, even if I do so from a small and limited country, as you were saying.

Salah 'Isa: Does it not sometimes concern you that you are alone in the middle of an Arab nation that is looking for compromise solutions.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: You know, I do feel that sometimes, and it is a natural feeling. Like prophets, revolutionaries feel alienated from the world in which they live because they bring a message that clashes with the established order. Even Noah, who according to the Holy Koran lived to be 950 years old, despaired and cried out, "Oh God, I have called to my people night and day, but my call only makes them flee more" [Koran LXXI, 5-6]. And he called out, "Oh my Lord, leave not a single one of the unbelievers on earth" [Koran LXXI, 26]. In other words, annihilate them, because every time he called on the people to look to their own benefit, they called on him to do the opposite. This is a tragedy that revolutionaries also live, because they have an awareness and a sensitivity that drives them to anger and rebellion, and to dream and visualize what others cannot see. The others may not have this anger. If they did, they would all be revolutionaries. This anger and this rebellion against the present reality alienate the revolutionaries from the world in which they live. Even the revolutionaries' dreams appear strange because the revolutionary sees tomorrow and dreams of the future as if it were real because he is sure that it can be realized. It is a vision that those who are not revolutionaries cannot see or do not believe can be realized. I, for example, believe that the Arab nation could be a paradise, that it could be a single, strong state. I can imagine the possibility of linking the Nile with the great artificial river, so that the desert between Egypt and Libya can be watered and planted with crops, so that the Western Desert can be filled with fruit and become a lush garden.

'Abd-al-'Azim Manaf: The case of Sudan has been closed, as well as the case of Morocco. What is the next one?

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi: The dossier of the revolution -- and it is a dossier which is constantly open -- is a revolution that must take on all the legacies, conflicts and complexities on Arab soil: reactionism, regional borders, backwardness, and the spheres of influence of imperialism and Zionism.

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